

University of Groningen

Negative Adjectives as licensors of Negative Polarity Items in English and Serbian

Bosnic, Ana

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Publication date:
2014

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Bosnic, A. (2014). *Negative Adjectives as licensors of Negative Polarity Items in English and Serbian*. Poster session presented at TABU Dag 35, Groningen, Netherlands.

Copyright

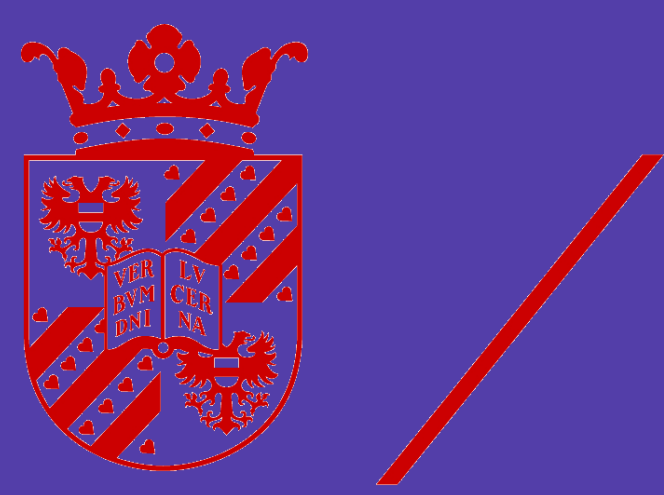
Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.



university of
 groningen

Negative adjectives as licensors of NPIs in English and Serbian

Ana Bosnić

University of Groningen/ University of Novi Sad



INTRODUCTION

Negative Concord: more than one negative element is allowed in order to convey a single negative concept - Serbian (1)

Double Negation: two negative elements cancel each other out and result in an affirmative sentence -English (2)

(1) *Nećemo te više nikad ništa pitati.*

neg.will.3rd.p.pl you.acc more never nothing ask

(2) We don't need *no/any help.

Similarity: with respect to negative adjectives and their licensing of NPIs they both yield Double Negation in constituent negation (3):

(3) a. *Nesvesna *nikakvih/ikakvih opasnosti, otišla je na put.*

unaware no-kind/any-kind.gen dangers went is on trip

b. *Unaware of *no/any dangers, she went on vacation.*

TERMINOLOGY

NPIs are lexical units that can appear mainly in negative contexts and have to be licensed (allowed) by negative elements in a sentence.

Fro Serbian there are two types of NPIs:

i-NPIs - long-distance licensing items:

- iko, išta, igde, ikad

ni-NPIs (n-words) - clause-mate licensing items:

- niko, ništa, nigde, nikad

N-words are negative elements which can or cannot express negation which depends on their syntactic position.

An expression α is an **n-word** iff (Giannakidou, 2002:2):

- α can be used in structures containing sentential negation or another α -expression yielding a reading equivalent to one logical negation; and
- α can provide a negative fragment answer.



RESEARCH QUESTION

How come negative adjectives cannot license ni-NPIs locally and allow a Negative Concord reading?

METHOD

Research method: questionnaire (two tasks); 40 informants (students of English language and literature in Novi Sad, native speakers of Serbian)

Results: more than 90% of participants disallow constructions with negative adjectives and ni-NPIs in Serbian.

ANALYSIS

Feature checking approach, following Bošković (2008, 2009), Zeijlstra (2004) and Fitzgibbons (2010):

- interpretable and uninterpretable [Neg] feature on negative heads, NPIs and negative adjectives in NC languages:

Negative heads: [uNeg], [iK_{NC}]

N-words: [iNeg], [uK_{NC}] - inherently negative

Negative adjectives: [iNeg] - semi-negatives, carrying negation

i-NPIs: [uNeg] - not inherently negative but licensed by negative markers

Problem: Negated prepositional phrases with “split” n-words in environments with negative adjectives:

- a. *Nespremna za *nikakve/ikakve poduhvate, odbila je ponudu.*
unprepared for no.kind/for any.kind.acc adventures, turned-down is offer
- b. *Nespremna ni za kakve/*i za kakve poduhvate, odbila je ponudu.*
unprepared no for kind/any for kind.acc adventures, turned-down is offer
“Unprepared for any adventures, she turned down the offer.”

Solid ground for further research!

CONCLUSION

• Contexts with negative adjectives are negative, but not Negative Concord environments. They are **Double Negation environments**.

• Proposition:

Sentences with negative adjectives represent

a DN licensing context of true NPIs (i-NPIs and any-NPIs) that allow clause-mate i-NPIs.

(and in these terms they share a similarity with English).

REFERENCES

•Bošković, Ž. (2008). On two types of negative constituents and negative concord. In: *Proceedings of FDSL 6.5*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang. 9-35.

•Bošković, Ž. (2009). Licensing negative constituents and negative concord. In: *Proceeding of NELS 38*. 101-114.

•Giannakidou, A. (2002). Licensing and sensitivity in polarity items: from downward entailment to nonveridicality. *CLS*, 38, 29-53.

•Fitzgibbons, N. (2010). *Licensers and Meanings: Structural Properties of Dependent Indefinites*. PhD dissertation. UCONN.

•Zeijlstra, H. (2004). *Sentential Negation and Negative Concord*. PhD dissertation. University of Amsterdam.

CONTACT

E-mail: ana.bosnic88@gmail.com

